In the Claims:

A complete listing of claims in the instant application is provided below as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material comprising a natural cellulosic material defined by hollow fibrous tubes that have been sequentially (i) dried, (ii) combed in a direction to substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes, (iii) stretched substantially in said direction, (iv) twisted substantially about said direction, and (v) compressed substantially in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of said natural cellulosic material is greatest along said direction.

2. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 1 further comprising a powder material adhering to and residing within said hollow fibrous tubes, said powder material being inert with respect to said natural cellulosic material and initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein a product of said chemical reaction is water.

3. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 1 wherein said natural cellulosic material is cotton.

4. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 2 wherein said powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

5. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 2 wherein said powder material is selected such that another product of said chemical reaction is gaseous.

6. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material comprising:

hollow fibrous tubes of cotton that have been sequentially (i) dried, (ii) combed in a direction to substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes of cotton, (iii) stretched in said direction, (iv) twisted about said direction, and (v) compressed in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of said hollow fibrous tubes of cotton is greatest along said direction; and

a powder material adhering to and residing within said hollow fibrous tubes of cotton, said powder material being inert with respect to said hollow fibrous tubes of cotton and initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein a product of said chemical reaction is water.

7. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 6 wherein said powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

8. (Withdrawn) A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 6 wherein said powder material is selected such that another product of said chemical reaction is gaseous.

9. (Currently amended) A method of making a moisture-absorbing material that expands linearly upon moisture absorption comprising the steps of:

providing a natural cellulosic material that is defined by hollow fibrous tubes;

drying said natural cellulosic material;

combing, after said step of drying, said natural cellulosic material in a direction to substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes;

stretching, after said step of combing, said hollow fibrous tubes substantially in said direction wherein said hollow fibrous tubes are placed in a stretched state;

twisting~~, after said step of stretching is commenced,~~ said hollow fibrous tubes in said stretched state substantially about said direction; and

compressing, after said step of twisting, said hollow fibrous

tubes in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of said natural cellulosic material is greatest along said direction, and wherein said hollow fibrous tubes expand along said direction when exposed to moisture.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of mixing a powder material with said hollow fibrous tubes wherein said powder material adheres to and resides in said hollow fibrous tubes, said powder material being inert with respect to said natural cellulosic material and initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein a product of said chemical reaction is water.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein said natural cellulosic material is cotton.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein said powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

13. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~9~~ 10 wherein said powder material is selected such that another product of said chemical reaction is gaseous.

14. (Currently amended) A method of making a moisture-absorbing material that expands linearly upon moisture absorption comprising the steps of:

providing cotton in the form of hollow fibrous tubes thereof;

drying said cotton;

mixing, during said step of drying, a powder material with said hollow fibrous tubes wherein said powder material adheres to and resides in said hollow fibrous tubes, said powder material being inert with respect to said natural cellulosic material and initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein a product of said chemical reaction is water;

combing, after said step of drying, said cotton in a direction to substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes;

stretching, after said step of combing, said hollow fibrous tubes substantially in said direction wherein said hollow fibrous tubes are placed in a stretched state;

twisting~~, at least after said step of stretching is commenced,~~ said hollow fibrous tubes in said stretched state substantially about said direction; and

compressing, after said step of twisting, said hollow fibrous tubes in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of said cotton is greatest along said direction, and wherein said hollow fibrous tubes expand along said direction when exposed to moisture.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 14 wherein said powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 14 wherein said powder material is selected such that another product of said chemical reaction is gaseous.